

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6552

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

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AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 2995

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MILI UR YO

SUBJ: TIVAT

REF: BELGRADE 2272

1. YUGOSLAVS CONTINUE TO AFFIRM THEY WILL NOT ALLOW TIVAT TO BECOME SOVIET BASE, AND CLAIM SOVIETS HAVE NOT EVEN ASKED.

2. IN APR 27 CALL ON BUDISLAV SOSKIC, PRESIDENT OF MONTENEGRO ASSEMBLY, I ASKED ABOUT SHIP REPAIR LAW AS IT WAS PRESENTLY BEING APPLIED AT TIVAT. I SAID THAT I UNDERSTOOD A CERTAIN COUNTRY WANTED TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT NAVAL PRESENCE AT TIVAT (PER REFTTEL), PARTICULARLY SINCE IT HAD RUN INTO SUCH DIFFICULTY WITH ANOTHER COUNTRY ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN. SOSKIC REPLIED THAT YUGOSLAVIA HAD A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE INTERESTS AND MOTIVES OF GREAT POWERS, BUT YUGOSLAVS WERE NOT AFRAID OF THE INTERESTS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY CAUSING THEM DAMAGE ON THIS SCORE. YUGOSLAVIA HAD NEVER SUBMITTED WHEN ITS INDEPENDENCE WAS THREATENED. SOSKIC SAID THAT NO CHANGE IN THE LAW WAS PLANNED. IF

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CHANGES WERE TO BE MADE, THEY WOULD BE PUT ON THE AGENDA

FOR DISCUSSION. WHEN SOSKIC ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT ABOUT THE LAW, I VOICED CONCERN RUSSIANS WOULD WANT TO EXPAND THEIR POSSIBILITIES IN TIVAT AS A RESULT OF THEIR DEBACLE IN EGYPT. SOSKIC ADMITTED THAT SUCH AN INTENTION COULD BE ASSUMED, BUT NOTHING HAD BEEN SAID TO HIM YET ABOUT TAKING DIRECT STEPS. IN ANY CASE YUGOSLAVIA WOULD NEVER LET TIVAT BECOME A RUSSIAN BASE.

3. YUGOSLAV FLS COLONEL JOVIC, PRESENT DURING POTOCAR-DATT CONVERSATION ON TIVAT CITED REFTTEL, TOLD US MAY 6 THAT NOW DEPARTED DATT MUST HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD POTOCAR, THAT SOVIETS HAD NOT PRESSED FOR BROADER USE OF TIVAT. HE CLAIMS POTOCAR SAID "WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE FORCES WHICH WOULD LIKE TO HAVE USE OF OUR PORTS. WE COULD SPECULATE AND MAKE A GOOD DEAL OF MONEY BY SO DOING. BUT WE COULD NEVER DO THIS BECAUSE IT WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH OUR POSITION IN THE WORLD AND WITH THE NON-ALIGNED. WE KNOW THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE DREAMING ABOUT THIS (TIVAT AND KOTOR), BUT THEY WOULD NEVER BRING IT UP FOR THEY KNOW WE WOULD REFUSE". JOVIC CLAIMED SOVIET-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS "PASSING THROUGH GENERAL CRISIS", BUT THAT THIS DUE TO IDEOLOGICAL RATHER THAN MILITARY PROBLEMS.

4. COMMENT: WHILE JOVIC MAY NOW BE COVERING UP AN OVERLY EXPLICIT ADMISSION OF SOVIET PRESSURE BY HIS BOSS, IT ALSO POSSIBLE THAT FORMER DATT WAS CONFUSED ABOUT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LATENT SOVIET DESIRE AND CURRENT PRESSURE. WHICHEVER IS THE CASE, I SUSPECT THAT SOVIETS HAVE IN FACT BROUGHT UP TIVAT OR THAT BREZHNEV WILL DO SO WITH TITO--BELIEVING HE MORE AMENABLE TO SOVIET NEEDS THAN HIS UNDERLINGS. SILBERMAN

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